

Key

Key Topic: Best Practices Part II are



OUT OF THE BOX

Out-of-the-box thinking. Creative methods. Best practices that better serve Kentuckians. See page 8.



WORKFORCE ISSUES

Quarterly publication of the Cabinet for Workforce Development

Volume VIII, Issue 4

Winter 1999

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Best Practices Part II Creative, unique approaches that assist consumers of cabinet agencies

\$2 million funds creative ways to deliver adult education

By Janet Williams Hoover, Communications Director

The Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy has funded 17 innovative adult education projects that provide creative approaches to delivering services.

The \$2 million in grants has been allocated to 12 new and four continuing projects covering 37 counties and to one statewide project. This funding marks the department's third round of innovative project grants.

Gov. Paul E. Patton said the grants are aimed at reaching adult learners who haven't responded to traditional methods of adult education.

"We know that Kentucky has many adults who don't have high school diplomas or who need to improve their basic skills," Patton said. "We also know that only about 5 percent of those people are coming into adult education centers for classes or tutoring. This tells us that we need to develop new ways of reaching people and teaching people."


Reecie D. Stagnolia, the department's commissioner, said that panels judging the proposals were looking for projects that employ creative, replicable and cost-effective ways to deliver services; include unique instructional methods or technology; explore new and effective ways to integrate basic academic skills with occupational and life skills; or develop new recruitment and retention strategies to reach adult learners.

"These grants fund short-term projects that explore new and innovative approaches to adult education. If successful, these approaches can be replicated and integrated into on-going programs in other areas of the state." — Reecie Stagnolia, commissioner, Department for Adult Education and Literacy

Stagnolia also pointed out that these 17 grants are not meant to sustain on-going adult education programs.

"These grants fund short-term projects that explore new and innovative approaches to adult education," he said. "If successful, these approaches can be replicated and integrated into on-going programs and in other areas of the state."

On-going adult education and literacy services are available free of charge through adult education centers statewide. For information about the location of adult education centers in your area, call toll-free 1-800-928-READ.

Descriptions of the projects follow on page 2. 

Key Issues

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Creative approaches to adult education

From inmates at LaGrange to Ford assembly plant workers, creative adult education providers have received grants to deliver their services to various target groups statewide.



Workforce Development Collaborative of Northern Kentucky (Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce), \$155,725. This consortium of long-term health providers will provide basic workplace essential skills training for entry-level workers followed by Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training for those participants who demonstrate the ability and desire to become a CNA. Approximately 250 individuals will be served in Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties.

West Kentucky Educational Cooperative, \$173,352. This project focuses on the development and implementation of an accelerated work-readiness and workplace skills enhancement curriculum that addresses the basic academic, occupational, employability and life skills needs of the targeted population. An estimated 75 participants will be served in Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall and McCracken counties.

Newport Independent Schools, \$41,925. This project will place a training and employment liaison in the One-Stop Service Center in Covington. The liaison will work with area adult

education programs and the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to provide individualized and small group counseling for a wide variety of employment and career needs. Approximately 1,000 individuals will be served.

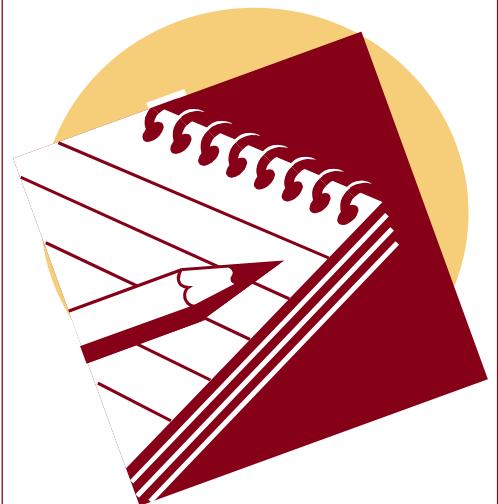
Owensboro Mercy Health System, \$51,002. This project is a continuation of the Destination 2010 Learning Lab, which provides on-site, integrated academic and workplace essential skills to workers. Program enhancements include a mandatory orientation to the lab for new hires, interpersonal skills workshops, student mentors, job-shadowing experiences and recruitment stipends. It is projected that 100-200 individuals from Breckinridge, Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, Hopkins, McLean, Muhlenberg and Webster counties will be served.

The Career Center, \$188,284. This project provides basic skills training to workers at three different Wells Health work sites, as well as health education training at Longfellow Education Center and the Career Center for potential hires. An estimated 950 participants will be served in Daviess, Hancock and Henderson counties.

Central Kentucky Technical College, \$45,171. This project provides an English-as-a-second-language family literacy program for international elementary school students and their parents. The college is partnering with Operation Read and the Fayette County Board of Education to offer services to 30 participants in Fayette County.

Kentucky Educational Television, \$94,965. The KET network, in partnership with the United Automotive Workers-Ford Motor Company, will provide workers and their spouses with workplace essential skills using the newly produced Literacy Link Workplace Essential Skills videotape, print, on-line and professional development series. The programs will be located at two Ford assembly plants in Jefferson County.

Jefferson Community College, \$500,000. This is a continuation of the School-at-Work project, which is designed to teach basic skills to entry-level food service workers. Distance learning broadcasts are delivered to schools and work sites using Kentucky Educational Television. Approximately 3,000 individuals across Kentucky will be served.



Laurel Literacy

Council Inc., \$48,800.

This project will add a career path component to Laurel County Adult Education and Literacy programs. A career coach will be added to the staff, and a career library will be developed. The program will serve at least 50 participants in Laurel County.



anticipated that 60 participants will be served in Ohio County.

LaGrange Education Center (Kentucky State Reformatory), \$33,715.

This project focuses on delivery of educational programs over closed-circuit TV to approxi-

mately 36 percent of the Kentucky State Reformatory's special needs inmates who are unable to access current, traditional school programs due to disabilities, job conflicts or security restrictions. It is anticipated that 75 students will be served.

Pendleton County Board of Education, \$50,626.

This project develops a job coach team that will support current workers as well as new hires in the community. The project will provide participants with communication, decision-making, listening, reasoning, self-management and creative-thinking skills. It is anticipated that 20-40 individuals will be served in Pendleton County.

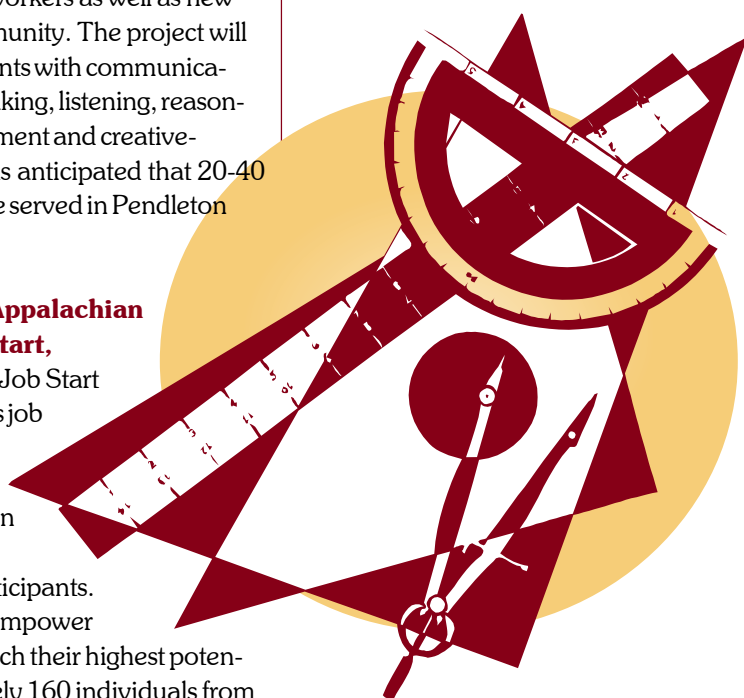
Christian Appalachian Project – Job Start, \$203,957.

The Job Start program provides job training, job readiness, life skills and retention services to 160 Appalachian participants. Its purpose is to empower individuals to reach their highest potential. Approximately 160 individuals from eight counties will be served at sites in

Jackson, Owsley, McCreary and Rockcastle counties.

Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative, \$123,640. Project LEAP (Learning Empathy, Anger Management and Problem Solving) provides a 12-week life and social skills curriculum to at-risk juveniles and adults in correctional institutions, court-mandated programs, family literacy programs and adult education and literacy programs. Approximately 220 individuals will be served in Shelby County.

Union County Board of Education, \$50,441. TECH START uses a customer-centered approach to provide adults with basic skills while they learn to perform high-tech, high-skills tasks. The project is a combined effort of school, community and industry to increase the number of qualified workers in Union County. Approximately 65 participants will be served.



Lincoln County Board of Education, \$22,992. The project focuses on a more effective recruitment and retention strategy that will motivate students to enroll and remain in existing programs. Students must complete a checklist to be eligible for incentives toward winning a car.

McLean County Fiscal Court, \$25,392. Project ACHIEVE (Accomplishing Community and Human Improvement through Education, Values and Enrichment) provides a work and educational challenge for qualified participants. This program will prepare 36 participants for the future workforce by teaching transferable vocational and academic skills necessary for success.

Ohio County Fiscal Court/Career Center, \$100,000. Project HOPE (Hoping Ohio Countians Pursue Education) focuses on improved recruitment and retention of participants. HOPE participants will gain valuable computer and employability skills by using computers and integrated software as the primary instructional tool. It is

Key Issues

EDUCATION PAYS



EDUCATION PAYS PROFILE

School helps drive Toni Taylor toward a brighter future and away from a tragic past. This Benton woman embraces the

Value of Education

By Mary Ann Scott,
Managing Editor



Most people who decide to continue their education experience the normal apprehensions that come with any new, life-altering phase of life.

Toni Taylor not only had to deal with the regular anxieties that occur with such a pursuit, but she had to unchain herself from a tormented past in order to do so.

In the process, her educational goals have helped her overcome those very things she thought stood in the way of a new existence.

Taylor, 42, is currently in her third semester at West Kentucky Technical College in Paducah, where she studies office technology.

She is a soft-spoken woman whose excellent grades and can-do attitude belie a childhood and early adulthood that did anything but foster a nurturing environment.

She describes herself as a "survivor of many things: verbal, physical and sexual abuse ... and abandonment."

"My family always told me I was stupid, and that I would never amount to anything," Taylor said. "The abuses have left various scars on my body, mind and psyche."

Taylor grew up in Ohio, graduated from high school and was married three years later to an engineer. She and her husband moved frequently, as he was transferred to jobs in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, New York and then to Kentucky.


"In my mind, I heard one link in those chains from my past break. For the first time in my life I thought, 'I'm not stupid. I can learn.'" — Toni Taylor, who made the Dean's List her first semester at Murray State

The two settled in Benton, where Taylor began her postsecondary education in 1988 at Murray State University. It had been 13 years since she graduated from high school.

During her only semester at Murray, Taylor experienced periods of "black out."

"I would wind up in places, and I wouldn't know how I got there," explained Taylor. "I started seeking therapy after I found myself hanging off the railing of a seventh-story building on campus."

Taylor finished that semester at Murray and, despite her blackouts, made the Dean's List.

"In my mind, I heard one link in those chains from my past break," Taylor recalled. "For the first time in my life I thought, 'I'm not stupid. I can learn. I just need someone to give me a chance.'" 



Taylor bought a small grocery store, which she's converted into her home. She has done much of the renovation herself, including the installation of kitchen cabinet counters, pictured above.

But before Taylor could continue her education, she had to undergo what turned into years of therapy, several surgeries and endure a drawn-out divorce and settlement from her husband that began in 1990.

The psychological counseling center at Murray referred Taylor to a Paducah therapist who diagnosed her with multiple personality disorder and major depression. While undergoing treatment, Taylor and her therapist set realistic goals for her to achieve.

She also sought help from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, an agency within the Cabinet for Workforce Development that helps retrain people with disabilities and assists them with their education.

One of Taylor's first goals was to return to school, and in 1993 she registered for a class at West Kentucky Technical School (now a college).

She took a typing class, but Taylor was still "switching" personalities. "One alter personality didn't even know the

Taylor says her home "... doesn't have to be the Taj Mahal – but it's my personal self-esteem project." After reading a do-it-yourself manual, Taylor put up many of the walls and paneling in her Benton house.



alphabet, which made things very difficult," recalled Taylor.

Undeterred, in 1995, Taylor enrolled in an exploratory carpentry class for women at the school.

"One of the main reasons I took the class, was because I had just purchased a mom-and-pop grocery store that I was turning into my home," explained Taylor.

"I find I learn best by 'hands-on' experience," Taylor said. "I learned some about plumbing and wiring while working alongside the plumber and electrician. They showed me what to do, and I did a lot of it (in the house) myself. I even cut and installed the counter-top in my kitchen, which isn't real easy to do."

After reading do-it-yourself manuals, she put up walls and paneling in her home.

She also performed some heavy-duty landscaping around her abode, moving rip-rap (large rocks) to form raised bed planters. "I've probably pushed and lifted about 64 tons of rock and topsoil combined," said Taylor.

"I lined the area with plastic and shoveled in most of the topsoil myself. When my strength was gone, I did hire a guy with a Bobcat to finish the job," Taylor said.

The renovation of Taylor's home is a reflection of its owner. "I lacked imagination and creativity before I bought this place, but now I've attained both," explained Taylor. "It doesn't have to be the Taj Mahal – but it's my personal self-esteem project."

See **Taylor**, page 15

Taylor believes she has probably moved or lifted about 64 tons of rip-rap (large rocks) and topsoil to form raised bed planters just outside her home.

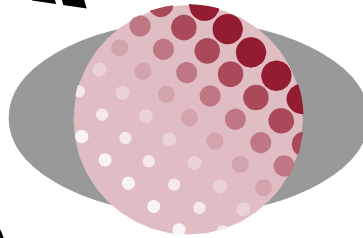


Key Issues

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Visually impaired job seekers prove there is

More than meets the eye



By Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer

Difficulty in finding a job can be frustrating and discouraging for anyone.

But what if you had been looking for two years and despite a nearly 4.0 grade-point average, a bachelor's degree and two internships, no one would hire you?

What if you had searched for a full-time job for nine years without being hired and even had one person wad up your application and throw it away in front of you?

What if you had 18 years of work experience but you had trouble getting an interview even though the economy was robust?

In each of these cases, the person kept trying. With help from Cabinet for Workforce Development agencies, they were all hired this year. But what was the problem?

Vision.

Not the job seekers' vision but the prospective employers' mental picture of what a blind or visually impaired person can do.

That's where Debbie Brizendine, a Department for the Blind (DFB) counselor in Bowling Green has made the difference for her consumers. In each of these cases, Brizendine supported her clients through various services and became a partner with them in their job search.

High achiever found employers couldn't see past disability

Kimberly Shain Parsley, 24, was devastated when she could not find employment for two years after she graduated from Western Kentucky University with a double major in public relations and government.

She said she thought excelling in school would prove to prospective employers that she could do the work, but her achievements were overshadowed by her disability when she applied for jobs.

"It was a rude awakening. It didn't matter because the only thing employers could see was the disability. It was hard not to take it personally," Parsley said.

In May, Parsley applied for two jobs she knew she could do and she wanted. She was rejected without getting interviews. A Western professor told her about an opening at the university. She said she felt so drained of hope that she almost didn't go for the interview.

But she mustered the courage for one more try and was hired by Western as a communication specialist. As a writer and assistant editor of *On Campus*, a monthly newsletter, Parsley is using her education and skills.

"The Department for the Blind helped me to find job opportunities and look in places I would not normally have known about and to have the equipment to be successful," she said.

"It was a rude awakening. It didn't matter because the only thing employers could see was the disability. It was hard not to take it personally." — Kimberly Parsley, DFB client



The Department for the Blind assisted Kimberly Shain Parsley in her two-year job search that ended with a communications job at Western Kentucky University. Parsley's guide dog, Garnet, helps her maneuver the steps in her workplace in Van Meter Hall.

Parsley lost her sight in 1990 when she was a freshman at Butler County High School. Her mother contacted the DFB to learn about their rights and for guidance. Brizendine worked with school officials on accommodations for Parsley.

Brizendine said it takes some extra work for a school to make modifications for a student who is blind. "Most school systems need our guidance to make accommodations and then they go ahead," she said.

When Parsley went to Western as a college student, the department bought her assistive technology such as a computer and tape recorder and paid for reader services for library research.

"Debbie Brizendine not only told me about the practical things I needed to do to be successful in college but she gave me a lot of support," Parsley said. "She encouraged me to find a way around or in some cases through difficulty."

Experienced man never gave up on job quest

Terry Willis was a manager at a Bowling Green grocery store for nearly 18 years before his sight became so impaired that he felt he could no longer do the job and quit. Unfortunately, when Willis resigned he did not know about the department and its services that could have helped him retain his job.

"It was frustrating but I never gave up. ... Everything I needed to get my foot in the door was at my disposal to get a job."—*Terry Willis, DFB client*

Willis was referred to the DFB when he began receiving disability benefits from Social Security. He went to the department's Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center in Louisville for rehabilitation services to remain independent and re-enter the workforce.

At the center, he learned to use software he needed to operate a computer and became interested in customer service work. Willis and Brizendine developed his resume and began a job search. They worked together on job contacts and while Willis had several interviews, he was not offered a job. She referred Willis to the Department for Employment Services to register for employment.

Lawrence Brame with the Department for Employment Services was knowledgeable about services that DFB offered and recognized Willis' potential. They worked together on job development and employer contacts.

Brame contacted Quality Awning in Bowling Green about Willis, and the owners were interested. Brizendine

and Dorothy Brame, a technology specialist, met with the owner of Quality Awning at the job site to explain DFB services and determined the software needed for Willis to use the company's computer system. Quality Awning hired Willis in May.

"It was frustrating but I never gave up. I knew there was someone out there who would hire me," Willis said. "Everything I needed to get my foot in the door was at my disposal to get a job."

Nine-year job search ends

James Gober of Bowling Green searched for nine years before landing a job with Brizendine's help at the Yellow Cab Company as a call taker.

In 1989, the DFB began working with Gober to train for a job. He participated in personal training classes

*See **Meets the Eye**, page 15*



Terry Willis uses a magnifying glass to read information on his computer screen at Quality Awning in Bowling Green. Department for the Blind and Department for Employment Services employees helped Willis in his job search.

Key Issues

BEST PRACTICES

Part II of II

Bright ideas pop OUT of THE Box

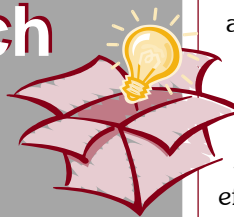


Employees in the Cabinet for Workforce Development pride themselves on their “out-of-the-box” thinking, which often results in innovative ways, both big and small, to better serve the citizens of Kentucky.

The following stories make up Part II of some cabinet agencies’ best practices, from an on-site day care center at a vocational rehabilitation center that helps train center students to an area technology school that designs and builds a house.

Children learn and teach at new day care center

By Janet Williams Hoover, Communications Director



Half a dozen toddlers are both teachers and learners in the newest training program at the Carl D. Perkins Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Center.

Located in the rural community of Thelma, the Perkins Center’s mission is to equip people with disabilities with the skills they need to enter the workforce. The latest addition to its many programs is an on-site day-care center, the Growing Together Child Care and Training Center. The center meets vital needs for the toddlers, the center’s students and staff and the surrounding community.

The Growing Together Center is aptly named because it provides learning opportunities for both young children

“Some people look at this and say it’s just baby-sitting. But it’s a lot more than that. It’s work, a lot of work. ... Having this kind of experience and knowledge will show employers that I can do the job.” — Karen Kirksey, Perkins student, day care training

and students who are preparing themselves for the workforce. The students teach toddlers about numbers, colors and words, while the children teach students about child development, effective lesson plans and patience.

Karen Kirksey, 21, is a student in the three-month training program. She wants to work in a day-care center and eventually pursue an associate’s degree in child development.

“I love the program,” she said. “I’ve always loved working with kids, and when I found out about this program, I knew it was for me.”

The students have classroom and textbook work in which they study and are tested on subjects such as nutrition, health and safety, day-care licensure regulations, child development and lesson planning. Then they put the



classroom learning into practice at the Growing Together Center.

"Some people look at this and say it's just babysitting," said Kirksey, who is from Radcliffe. "But it's a lot more than that. It's work, a lot of work. We do lesson plans for each day, and we have to know about licensing and regulations. We have to constantly interact with the kids and keep them happy. But it's fun, too.

"Having this kind of experience and knowledge will show employers that I can do the job."

Linda Bell, who directs the day-care center as part of her duties at the Perkins Center, says the program is designed to give students an edge in the job market.

"We want them to have all the skills they need to perform the job in a competent way," Bell said. "Having this kind of foundation is important for their career, but it's also important because they're learning about quality daycare for our children, who are very precious."

The demand for child care workers in Kentucky is expected to increase at

Karen Kirksey helps Matthew Barber build with some toy bricks. According to the Occupational Outlook to 2006 report from the Kentucky Department for Employment Services, job opportunities for child care workers will grow by 45 percent through 2006, making child care one of the fastest growing occupations in the commonwealth.



least for the near future. According to the *Occupational Outlook to 2006* report from the Kentucky Department for Employment Services, job opportunities for child-care workers will grow by 45 percent through 2006, making child care one of the fastest growing occupations in the commonwealth.

At Growing Together, between six and 10 children are enrolled at any one time. Their parents are Perkins Center students and staff and area residents.

Alisa Porter is a Paintsville resident who is enrolled in the Perkins Center's cosmetology program. Her two-year-old daughter, Alison, has been attending Growing Together for several months.

"I can see a big difference in Alison since she's been coming here," Porter said. "She's busy all day. She's learning her letters and numbers and colors. She has an opportunity to socialize with other children.

"I like it because I'm just right down the hall and can look in on her when I have a break. It's perfect for both of us."

Growing Together employs two full-time day-care workers, Shirley Conley and Anna Hunter. Each has more than three years of experience in child-care work and are taking classes for an associate's degrees in child development.

Kirksey says the entire Growing Together staff has motivated her to do well in the program.

"I'm eager to get a job because I know I'm good at this," Kirksey said. "The staff has confidence in me. And I have confidence in myself. When I go out into the job market, I know I'll be successful."

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Karen Kirksey, right, a student in the three-month day care training program, checks out flash cards with Alison Porter.

Key Issues

BEST PRACTICES

Logan County Adult Ed students move on, move up

By Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer



Isolated, embarrassed, fearful, alone, defeated and discouraged are some of the words consumers of the Logan County Adult Education and Literacy Program use to describe their feelings before they came for services. But once they started classes, many of them say their feelings about themselves and their futures became more positive.

Joyce Bond of Russellville has benefited from the literacy program and now gives something back to the program by volunteering her time as a tutor of English as a Second Language (ESL) students and a Side-by-Side Family Education instructor's assistant.

"I used to think I was alone and nobody cared. I can't say that anymore. I can come here and talk to anyone," Bond said.

Bond attended a month-long welfare-to-work program called Project LIFE that helped her get a job in April at Wal-Mart. She learned how to write a resume and do interviews among other job-readiness skills. She continues to come to family education to help other people and because she feels encouraged there.

"I've learned to say 'I'll try,'" the 49 year old said. "I've got a lot more confidence. I'm still afraid of a lot of things, but I can handle them better."

She also takes a math class through family education instructed by Marie Reeves to better help her 7-year-old daughter with homework. Bond quit school in the tenth grade and got married.

"These programs are important because I'm thinking about her future. I want her life to be better than mine. I

would have loved to have stayed in school, but I didn't have the guidance," Bond said.

She tells other people about the Side-by-Side Family Education program

and how Project LIFE has helped her. She said recently someone who didn't

know she had gone through Project LIFE told her that the programs to help welfare recipients get jobs do not work.

"I told her I am a graduate of Project LIFE, and I know it works. We were there to get a job, and all of us got jobs," she said.

Kimberley Aguilera, the ESL coordinator, sees the difference that the program makes in the lives of people who do not speak English. Learning English allows them to participate in their new communities instead of being isolated.

"Well-meaning Americans don't engage in conversation because they don't want to embarrass them, so they don't talk," Aguilera said. "You can live for a long time in our country and be isolated. They survive but do not thrive."

Sumiko Williams, a 63-year-old ESL student, met her husband when he was an American soldier in the Vietnam War. The Japanese native had two sons and ran a restaurant with her husband and got involved in a local church but she still felt left out because she depended on her husband to communicate for her.



"I used to think I was alone and nobody cared. I can't say that anymore. I can come here and talk to anyone." — Joyce Bond, former Adult Ed student, current ESL tutor



Joyce Bond and Robert Miller work on their writing skills in the Side-by-Side Family Education class. Parents come to the classes to improve their skills so that they can help their children with homework.

Aguilera said Williams, like many immigrants, learned survival skills so that she could do activities such as grocery shopping, but she was not able to have a conversation with someone by herself. Even though Williams has lived in Russellville for 24 years and worked at Wal-Mart for 13 years, she still could not fully participate and communicate with other people. The language barrier put up an invisible wall around her.

After more than a year of study through the ESL program she can converse with people on her own and feels more confident. Even people at her church who have known her for long time have said they can understand Williams better, and she is more involved.

Recently Williams and Hitoko Moriyama, another ESL student from Japan, shared their culture with students at a local school.

"Before they came to ESL they wouldn't have had the confidence to share their culture at the school," Aguilera said.

Moriyama has been in Russellville for more than two years and even took English in school in Japan for six years, but speaking English and understanding everyday conversation was difficult for her. "Before I couldn't catch words. Now I start to understand some words," she said.

Moriyama came to Kentucky from Japan with her husband who works for a Japanese automotive parts company.

The center also reaches out to people through its literacy program. While most of its literacy classes meet at the local library where the program is located, a new class of five people meets in a tutor's home two days a week. This flexible arrangement works well for tutor Brenda Pendleton, who does not drive and the students who felt embarrassed about coming to a public place for help.



Above: Sumiko Williams, center, laughs at her pronunciation of a word with Hitoko Moriyama, left, and their English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor Fran Baugh.

Right: The ESL class, which Moriyama, left, and Williams attend three days a week, helps students understand conversational English.



"When someone feels comfortable with someone, then they'll come more and do more," Pendleton said.

The long-range goal for the participants is to earn a GED. Preparation for the GED test is another role of the Logan County Adult Education and Literacy program. The adult learning center is located in another building in Russellville but the programs are interconnected and share many of the same consumers. It is the only place in Logan County to go for GED preparation.

The Adult Learning Center also reaches into the community to bring services to people in Logan County where there is no public transportation system. In addition to classes at the Adult Learning Center, two new projects are being launched. One-day-a-week classes will be offered at the Russellville Housing Authority and the Auburn Senior Center.

Adult Learning Center Coordinator Pam Morgan said she meets monthly with representatives from other govern-

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Key Issues

BEST PRACTICES

Ohio County One-Stop shop caters to every need

By Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer



The Ohio County Career Center has thrown convention out the window and replaced it with possibilities.

The center does not have the traditional walls between services, so programs are blended to better serve people. The clientele is varied and represents all segments of the community. In addition to helping people find jobs or earn GEDs, the center reaches out to local businesses by teaching employees computer skills.

"We have tried to educate the public that this is not just a place to get a GED, but also a place for job enhancement," said Bobbie McGrew, Career Center director.

The Ohio County Career Center is part of an innovative approach to serving Kentuckians' education, training and employment needs through one-stop career centers. Each one-stop is tailored to the community it serves to meet that area's needs. It is a central location for people to get training and employment

information and services instead of a fragmented approach to linking people with governmental programs. This one-stop integration of services, established in Kentucky over the past four years, is stressed in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

The effort to create a central place where everyone feels comfortable to come for career assistance is paying off. What began in 1996 as a satellite office with McGrew and a part-time receptionist has expanded to 12 full-time and three part-time staff people. In September 1996 the center served 56 people. Now it serves more than 900 people a month and it's growing.

During its first two years, the Career Center outgrew its one room and two offices and expanded into 13 rooms, including a 10-station computer lab.

"What thrills me the most is we expected to see people who are entering the job market, but we did not expect to see business executives who have lost jobs due to downsizing come here for services," McGrew said.

By going after local government and business support and grants, McGrew has built a five-day-a-week full-service center. As a result, employers do

not have to go to Owensboro for services and the people of Ohio County benefit.

The Career Center is a true community project. It operates under the direction of the Ohio County Fiscal Court and is funded with \$75,000 from taxpayers and \$400,000 from grants. To get the center off the ground a local business donated half of the office furniture, another donated food for its

kick-off reception, and a printing company discounted its service on materials.

"It's a buy-in issue. It's a team effort across the county," McGrew said.

For Betty Calloway, who is in a welfare-to-work program called Learning Information

for Future Employment (LIFE), the center is an oasis.

"There were a lot of times when I didn't want to get up, but I knew I would feel better when I came here so I could talk to someone. When I've had a bad weekend, I think I can't wait till Monday so I can go back to school," said Calloway.

She is working toward a GED, learning how to write a resume and do interviews and building her confidence. Although she works at her own pace, she is in a small class for six hours a day where she feels a kinship with other students and the staff. The goal of the six-week course is to help welfare recipients find and keep a job.

"I figured it was like going back to school. It's nothing like that," Calloway said. "It's more like a job. It helps me get ready for a job like filling out a resume. I never knew how to do a resume."

One Stops are central sites for employment and training information and services. This saves people the hassle of traveling to various locations to obtain needed information.



The center tackles obstacles to employment by building partnerships with existing public and private service providers. For example, transportation is a problem for Ohio Countians because they do not have a public transportation system or taxis. The center links its customers who do not have transportation with the Green River Intransit System (GRITS) from Audubon Area Community Services.

The Adult Learning Center, which is part of the Career Center, promotes lifelong learning with its adult education and literacy programs. During the 1999 fiscal year, more than 300 people participated in adult education classes. While the Adult Learning Center helps people earn a GED, it also serves people who want to brush up on skills for college or study for a pre-employment test called SAGE, which is required by many area factories.

Rebecca Leach, an adult education instructor, says that versatility helps the center reach such a diverse group of people, who don't feel stigmatized for coming for services.

"We could have someone who is learning to read next to someone who is a college graduate studying for SAGE," Leach said.

The Career Center makes itself available as a community resource by offering a meeting room, employer interview rooms and a resource library, and using inventive approaches to attract people. Recently, the center offered computer courses to the public for a \$5 donation to the United Way as part of its third anniversary.


In the 1999 fiscal year, the center served more than 100 employers in a four-county region. Employers not only searched for job candidates using the center's resources, but they send employees to the center for computer classes.

McGrew says the center's success depends largely on local business and government leadership, support and money. She said the community leadership has made a commitment to learning and education beyond the 12th grade.

"This one-stop is probably what someone envisioned when they started

WIA because it takes the services to the people," McGrew said.

McGrew also credits the staff for making the center thrive.

"We believe in the team effort and cross training about the programs," McGrew said. "That's what one-stop is all about ... making the best for the buck." 

This is the house that Jake (and other students) built

By Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer

Teacher Tom Pyron believes that teens need a challenge or they get bored. He puts that belief into action every year when his carpentry students at Fulton County Area Technology Center build a house behind the school for a needy family.

This year about 60 high school students are building a 1,100-square-foot house from student Jake Wall's design. It's the center's fifth house and Pyron thinks it will be the most impressive yet.

In addition to drafting and carpentry classes being involved in the project, students in business and interior design are taking part in the endeavor. Business students are doing bookkeeping and monthly financial reports on computer.

Except for plumbing, the students are responsible for building the entire house. The Purchase Area Development District is underwriting the cost of the house and will have it moved to the family's property at the end of the school year when it is completed. Pyron estimates that \$25,000 in materials will be used to build the house, and it will be worth approximately \$50,000.

In the spring, each first-year drafting student designs a house and presents the layout to the carpentry classes. The

carpentry students choose the design they will use for the next year and work with the recipients of the house to adjust the plans to their needs.

The Fulton County Area Technology Center's carpentry course was named the outstanding program this

See **House**, page 14



Junior Jake Wall designed the house being built behind the center in his spring drafting class. Each spring first-year drafting students compete to see whose design will be chosen for the next project.

Key Issues

BEST PRACTICES

House

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spring by the Department for Technical Education for its integration of academic and vocational classes.

Approximately 200 students from various academic and technical classes work together on the project. Drafting students put geometry into practice to design the house. Carpentry students use math skills such as measuring and computing to accurately bring the house plans to life. Business students use accounting to keep track of expenses and then present an end-of-year report on the house to the carpentry students.

All of the students involved in the project are using speaking and writing skills to present and sell their ideas to other students and teachers. At the end of the school year, a group of students makes an oral presentation and shows a video of the house at a meeting of the Purchase Area Development District Board, which includes local government officials.



Carpentry instructor Tom Pyron supervises senior Roshan Couch as he uses a jigsaw to prepare framing for the roof. Couch has worked on two houses at the Fulton County Area Technology Center.

Pyron said Wall's design for this year's house has several interesting elements including an arched front doorway, a cathedral ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows in the family room and a hip roof with intersecting gables. He said he thought the kitchen with its bay window at the sink sold the students on the house design. The instructor said having a house plan chosen for the yearly project is a mark of distinction for that student.

Senior Brian Major has worked on three houses. He said he enjoys the hands on experience of building houses and likes the detail work involved in finishing sheet rock the best.

"I like to get out and do something instead of just sitting in a classroom reading about it," said Major, a state Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) officer.

Although Major plans to pursue a career as a firefighter and paramedic, he wants to continue construction work as a hobby.

Fellow senior Roshan Couch said actually working on the house helps him to understand internal elements such as the electrical system instead of trying to visualize what it looks like from a textbook.

Pyron, who is in his eighth year at the school, was a contractor before he began teaching carpentry. He said the students are meticulous with their workmanship. Contrary to the image of teens being lazy or sloppy, Pyron finds his students take pride in their work.

"They like the fact that this is nice and we can do something more than the simple stuff. They want things to be right. I see that in teen-agers," Pyron said. "If it were just a simple box they would lose interest. They've found this to be a challenge."

Pyron said the program is worthwhile because students gain experience in



Seniors Brian Major (left) and Shane Butler work on the roof of the 1,100-square-foot house. All elements of the house, except for the plumbing, are done by about 60 area center students.

construction and it helps them to determine if they are interested in a career in that field. Even students who do not plan to go into a construction trade get practical experience they can use later when they have a home. He said the best students from Fulton County High School take courses at the center.

"I had always felt that if we were really going to teach carpentry, we needed to build a house," Pyron said.

Pyron said the yearly construction project has had some other benefits. It has gotten the center a lot of good publicity, strengthened the center's relationship with the high school and community, and drawn the community to the center through open houses. 🔍

**Next
Issue**

A new decade, a new century lies ahead — the cabinet and its agencies prepare to meet the future.

Plus

Sights from a day of diversity.

Key Issues

CONTINUING STORIES

Taylor

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With new confidence, Taylor took a job in 1995 – the first time she had worked in 17 years. During the next three years, Taylor worked several different jobs and was described by her employers as extremely hard working and diligent.


In 1998, after years of intensive therapy, Taylor's Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, Bettina Ivy, told Taylor she was ready to go back to school. "Her determination is phenomenal," said Ivy. "Education has given her focus despite all the other issues in her life."

In the fall of 1998, Taylor enrolled at West Kentucky Technical College. She made the Dean's List and signed up for the second semester. She made all A's that semester as well, but didn't take enough classes to qualify for the Dean's List.

But Taylor is not worried about taking a full load of classes. She knows that pacing herself is the best route for her.

"I appreciate Vocational Rehabilitation's help. They have encouraged me to take what I can handle at school," relates Taylor. "Because I'm an older student, I know I've got to make each class count."

In her office technology field, Taylor is focusing on administrative assistance and accounting. "My advisor at school thinks I would do really well in the accounting field. I plan to continue ... to be open and attentive."

That is part of what has kept Taylor on her road to success – an ability to keep her eye on the rewards of education. "Education has helped me deal with people and given me confidence," says Taylor. "Even though each semester is like starting over, I'm not so afraid to try." 

Meets the eye

Cont. from page 7

at the McDowell Center and earned a GED. He tried a variety of training programs and worked for Life Skills Industries, a sheltered workshop, to learn work skills.

Gober applied for manufacturing jobs for several years without being hired. He said some companies were receptive but others did not even consider his application when they found out that he is blind. In one case, his daughter took him to a factory that was hiring. When he turned in his application for a job he knew he could perform, the woman taking the application wadded up the paper and threw it in the trash.


"It's been an uphill thing because not many companies want to hire a blind person," he said.

Despite such discouragement, the 33 year old said he would rather work than sit at home. Before being hired by the Yellow Cab Company a year ago, he came into the company on his own time to learn the business and prove he could do the work.

He also upgraded his computer skills at the DFB office and learned to use the assistive software. DFB has provided other assistive technology for him to use at work and home. The cab company also made adjustments by computerizing its operation.

"I've learned all there is to learn in my job, and I want to learn more. I want to be the person who gets the promotion when it comes around," Gober said.

DFB gave each of these consumers the tools and encouragement they needed to train and search for a job.

"We need more employers to understand the abilities of persons with disabilities rather than focusing on the negative aspects. Employers are missing an available pool of job-ready and qualified applicants by not working with our agency," Brizendine said. 



Key Workforce Issues
is a publication of the
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Printed with state funds.



**Cabinet for Workforce Development
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Logan Co.

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ment agencies, schools, hospitals, the local ministerial association and other groups to network and collaborate with each other on projects such as new classes.

They also use each other's facilities and refer people to other services. For example, one lady heard about GED preparation services at the center through the local extension office and came for help.

Last year the center served more than 300 people, but Morgan wants to continue finding new ways to inform people about GED preparation services so they can reach the approximately 4,500 people in Logan County who do not have a high school diploma or GED.

Morgan said that while unemployment is not a critical problem in Logan County, people need a high school diploma or GED to advance. She said 95 percent of the people who come to the center for services have full-time jobs and families, but they dropped out of school for some reason.

"The students who come here have good lives, but they want better lives," Morgan said. "Some people go on to college or better jobs. This is the first step to getting some of the dreams in their lives."

Morgan said most of the students are in their late 30s or early 40s because it's the age when people realize that they can't move up without a high school diploma or GED. She said she tells students that getting a GED is a commitment and they have to remove the excuses to do it.

Since each student has different needs, the center tries to tailor the help with classes or one-on-one tutoring for the length of time needed to prepare for the test. Morgan said that while people can study for the test on their own at home, she encourages them to come to the program as often as possible so they can get help with questions and not be distracted.

"I really admire people who take the GED because it's not an easy test, but it's attainable," Morgan said.


Many people do not pursue a GED because they're afraid of failure or afraid they can't deal with academic subjects they had problems with in school. But even senior citizens come to the center to prepare for test.

"There's not any excuse for people not getting a GED. It may take longer for some people, but they can do it. I tell people to give me 30 days and let's get started," Morgan said.

She finds that when people get started and make a commitment to preparing for the test, they get more interested in studying, and they start remembering things from school.

"It's about choices. With some things, life controls you and you don't have a choice, but in this you do have a choice," Morgan said.

Both Morgan and Logan County Literacy Program Coordinator Cheryl Kelley know that people are intimidated by long-range goals like learning to read, getting a GED or learning English. Part of their jobs is to help people see that they can do it and show them how to break the big goal into smaller objectives. Getting people started is half the battle.

"If we chomp away at it little by little, it's attainable," said Kelley. "I tell people, 'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.'" 

Correction

In the last edition of the Key newsletter, a number was omitted in the phone listing for the Kentucky Americans with Disabilities coordinator's office.

The toll-free number is 1-877-423-2933.